VERMONT 21ST COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS
SITE IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

To: Vermont 21st CCLC Grantees
Re: Site Improvement Process
Date: January 26, 2006

The following pages outline our site visit improvement process. Participation is required for 21st CCLC grantees within their first year of operation and is available to all other interested projects in Vermont on a first come, first serve basis.

Design overview:

The spirit of the improvement design (see chart that follows) is to work collaboratively with the Vermont Department of Education, 21st CCLC staff and stakeholders on the local level, and 21st CCLC peers who will part of a visiting team to address the challenges that individual 21st CCLC programs are facing. The rubric below will be used to guide the process of improvement by analyzing 15 standards that are crucial to developing quality. The 15 standards are aligned with NSACA standards.

What do I need to do?

1. **Choose a date for a site visit.** We are scheduling <u>one</u> site visit a week for the 11 weeks between February 13th and April 28th. Meetings with visiting teams usually run from 11am-4:30pm, but visiting times can be designed to fit the needs of your program. You may sign up for a particular week and date by e-mailing Holly Morehouse at <u>morehous@together.net</u>. *Week assignments will be given on a first-some first-serve basis, so sign up early to get your first choice.* If the week you request is already taken, we will let you know immediately and you will have to select another date.
2. **Attend conference call.** All first-year sites are invited to attend a 30-minute conference call on Tuesday, February 7th at 10am to discuss the site visit process. The call in number is 1-877-278-8686 and the pin number is 590092. The purpose of this call is review the process and required materials and to answer any of your questions. The call will be hosted by Emanuel Betz and Holly Morehouse.
3. **Prepare pre-visit materials.** Each site is required to submit four items to Holly Morehouse at least one week before their scheduled visit. These materials will be shared with all members of the visiting team and are meant to familiarize team members with your program. The required materials are based on annual reporting requirements for CCLC programs and offer first-year sites an opportunity to get feedback and input from colleagues in the field prior to official report submission. Required pre-visit materials include:

a. Self-Assessment (Using the attached chart, rate your project in each of the assessment areas. Be sure to have multiple stakeholders complete the self-assessment and compare results. Also, identify and comment on specific action items by area. When rating, note that the gradations in the chart are meant to be used as a guide, not to be interpreted literally.)

b. Program Summary Table (List the following for any programs you are running or have run to-date: program name, estimated cost, description, average daily class size, meeting schedule)

c. Budget Expenditures (Create a budget table listing expenditures by category or use a printout of actual expenditures to-date)

d. Overview of Evaluation Plan (Create a table outlining the main components of your evaluation plan and note what data and information you have collected or are in the process of collecting in each area)

e. *Optional.* Any other program materials or brochures that you feel would be useful to the visiting team.

4. **Prepare meeting agenda.** Create an agenda for the visit starting with a 90-minute meeting with the CCLC Director, followed by separate meetings with key CCLC partners (e.g., principals, parents, students, advisory board members, teachers), and a program visit. If you have multiple sites, you will want to target the focus of the visit or it may be possible for the visiting team to separate into two groups in order to visit different locations.

5. **Receive findings report and follow-up phone call**. Within one to two weeks of your site visit, you will receive a report outlining the visiting team's comments and recommendations. After receiving this report, read through the findings and identify action steps to address suggestions or implement changes as needed. Shortly afterwards you will receive a follow-up phone call from Holly Morehouse to go over the visiting team's report, answer any of your questions, and discuss follow-up if needed on any action steps, corrections, or program modifications.

THE AFTER SCHOOL QUALITY GUIDE
"A guide for architects of quality after-school programs"

Area	Focus	Timeframe	Action
Pre Visit	**Questioning**	**Month 1**	▪ Visiting teams organized ▪ Visiting team reviews program documents ▪ Program completes and submits self-assessment and other supporting materials
The Visit	**Information Gathering**	**Month 2**	▪ Visiting team goes to site ▪ Additional information reviewed
Post Visit	**Assessment and Action**	**Month 3**	▪ Report generated by visiting team that includes observations, recommendations, and findings ▪ Action steps initiated by program
Follow Up	**Follow Up**	**Months 4-12**	▪ Follow-up discussions continue between site and team ▪ Findings are addressed

THE AFTER SCHOOL QUALITY GUIDE
ASSESSMENT TOOL

QUALITY GOAL	POINTS (0-5)			AREA
	Designing (0-1)	**Constructing (2-3)**	**Finishing (4-5)**	
I. Program and Need				
A. Programs serve the needs of the students and their families	Belief based on assumption only; little data to back assertions	Belief based on limited data; Cohorts used as basis	On-going assessments exist using multiple data; Individual used as basis	▪ Needs assessments

B. Safety policies are articulated and implemented	Policies and paperwork not written yet	Policies and paperwork being written	Policies and paperwork written and revised	▪ Organizational policies
	Precautions not taken yet	Precautions planned	Precautions are implemented	
	Transportation is planned but not implemented fully	Transportation is addressed to ensure equal access	Transportation plans go the extra mile to ensure access	▪ Program Access
	Program space meets the basic needs of the program	Program spaces include multiple rooms and venues with some barriers to usage	A variety of spaces are available to use with little or no barriers for access	▪ Indoor/Outdoor Facilities/Space

C. Programs enhance student learning and developmentally appropriate growth	Learning goals are unclear or not planned	Learning goals are developed for each program	Clear curricula are used to reach goals	▪ Content planning
	Program choices do not include academic opportunities	Program choices include academic opportunities, but there are gaps in the balance of offerings	Program choices include exemplary academic programs within a balance of other offerings	▪ Content offerings ▪ Ratios
	Students are not fully respectful and expectations of them could be higher	Students are respectful, but standards could be higher	Students and staff fully respect each other, and high expectations are the norm	▪ Positive Relationships ▪ Behavioral Guidance ▪ Individual Attention
	Some students may appear disengaged or bored	Students are engaged and having fun	All students are engaged, having fun, and performing	▪ Student participation
	Food is unhealthy and/or unavailable	Food is acceptable and available	Food is healthy and available	▪ Food ▪ Program Materials

II. Management	Designing (0-1)	Constructing (2-3)	Finishing (4-5)	
A. Program leadership is strong	Leadership does not have enough time to focus on the project Actions are reactive	Leadership guides to the project to reach goals but vision is unclear Actions are clear and consistent	Leadership guides the project to surpass goals with forethought and vision Actions are proactive and guide others to perform	▪ Director qualifications and attributes ▪ Management philosophy
B. Staff are qualified and continuously improve	Continuous improvement not in evidence Policies not in place	Continuous Improvement is valued but could be enhanced Policies in place but not followed	Culture of continuous improvement in evidence Policies are followed	▪ Professional development ▪ Hiring policies
C. A governance system guides the program	System does not exist	A group acts in an advisory role and could engage more stakeholders	A group has decision making power and involves a broad cross-section of stakeholders	▪ Governance duties and attributes

III. Evaluation	Designing (0-1)	Constructing (2-3)	Finishing (4-5)	
A. Questions, indicators, and objectives are well articulated and realistic	Plan exists as conceived for grant One person is working on evaluation without feedback from others	Plan has been refined and updated since inception Feedback on plan involves multiple viewpoints	Indicators have numerical targets that are analyzed annually or more often Outside evaluator and many staff engaged in designing and implementing process	▪ Evaluation plan ▪ Plan participants
B. Data collection and processing systems synthesize information	Data are not being collected No plan exists on how to use data	Data come in, but in different formats Data are driven by state requirements	Data forms are standardized and school based data is available Database is used	▪ Data quality ▪ Processing systems
C. Data is used for specific purposes	Data are not used to improve or promote program	Only positive data are reported out to community	Data drive program decisions and are reported out to community in multiple formats	▪ Actions taken using data

IV. Sustainability	Designing (0-1)	Constructing (2-3)	Finishing (4-5)	
A. A sustainability or business plan exists	A plan has not been conceived The focus is on building quality programs	Several ideas are being pursued which may grow into a plan More than one person is actively working on a plan	A written articulated plan exists involving multiple partners Multiple partners are contributing time and resources to the plan	▪ Business plan ▪ Plan participants
B. A variety of partners support the program including the school	The program has few, if any outside partners The school provides space, but little else	Partnerships focus on delivery of programs only Some school staff are active in the project	Partnerships are helping to improve and sustain the program over the long-term School staff and leadership are regular and active participants in the program	▪ Partner commitments ▪ School commitments
C. The program communicates with stakeholders	Few people know about the project in the general community and parent involvement is minimal Basic products have been sent out, but could be improved Program has not engaged policy makers	A communication plan exists, including communicating with parents, but more could be done Newsletters are sent out regularly but little else Program has made contact with policy makers	An articulated plan exists and is followed, including regular communications with parents Multiple formats have been used including events and presentations Program has multiple contacts with state and national policy makers	▪ Communication plan (including parents) ▪ Communication products ▪ Policy maker Contact

V. Budget	Designing (0-1)	Constructing (2-3)	Finishing (4-5)	Area
A. Budgets are efficiently organized	Budget may not match the reality expenditure as the project develops capacity	Budget is precise, but some line items may be inactive	Each line item of the budget is precise and justified	▪ Budget efficiencies
B. Budgets are updated and monitored	Budgets are handwritten quickly and provide little information Budget has been analyzed by only one person	Budget exists, but does not include all income and expenditures Budget used regularly by project director	Budget format includes multiple columns and follows standard accounting practices Budgets updated regularly and used for decision making involving multiple people	▪ Budget format ▪ Budget process
VI. Policy				
A. Policy makers are informed of project activity and successes				▪ Policy maker Contact